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A religious education program for a United States Naval installation.

Reaves, James Edward

Columbia University (Union Theological Seminary)

A RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR A UNITED STATES NAVAL INSTALLATION

JAMES EDWARD REAVES

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FOR A UNITED STATES NAVAL INSTALLATION

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JAMES EDWARD WEAVES

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1950

A RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
FOR A UNITED STATES NAVAL INSTALLATION

James Edward Reaves
II

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this essay is to trace the steps followed by a Chaplain in the establishment of a program of Religious Education at a United States Naval Air Station; to indicate the problems attendant in the process; to give a general evaluation of the program in operation; to compare the problems with those met by other Chaplains in setting up such programs; indicate the two main streams of thought in the field of Religious education; and finally to emphasize the necessity of the Chaplain knowing where he stands with regard to his philosophy of Christian Education before he undertakes to set up a program for his constituency.

A RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR A UNITED STATES NAVAL INSTALLATION

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A RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR A UNITED STATES NAVAL INSTALLATION

I. Development of Religious Education Program at the Naval Air Station, Memphis, Tennessee.

During the course of World War Two the Naval Air Station at Memphis, Tennessee, became the focal point of training for many thousands of young men just entering the technical training schools of the air arm of the Navy. To provide for their religious needs, a Chapel was erected at the center of the Station at a cost of some forty thousands of dollars. This chapel was utilized for Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish services. As many as five services were held each Sunday in the Chapel, as well as numerous daily services. The seating capacity was only four hundred fifty, so it became necessary for the Chaplains to hold other services in drill halls and barracks to take care of those who were unable to get in the Chapel for regular services. A chapter of the Service Men's Christian League was organized and a Bible class was held on Wednesday nights but attendance was never very great at either, according to the records now available in the Chapel. This just about completes the list of activities which might be classified as belonging in the sphere of religious education. There were some activities for Roman Catholic and Jewish personnel, but they will not be considered in this paper as it is the writer's intention to deal with the religious educational activities handled by the Protestant Chaplains.

Possibly the meager program outlined above was as adequate as anything that could be done, for it must be kept in mind that the personnel roster of the Station at that time was constantly changing. The schools ranged in length from a few weeks to six or eight months. Church attendance was high for most of those in school knew that it would be only a short time until they would be in some foreign country or aboard ship, and probably in combat in any case. But each man was very busy with his school work and it is not at all likely that an appreciable number would have had the time to have attended other activities had a more intensive program of religious education been undertaken.

During the war years there were no children living on the Station. Some of the officers and men had their families come to Memphis for a short time, but they were at least twenty miles from the Station and the Chaplain could not make their religious training his direct responsibility. The people who had their children with them either took them to the church of their preference in Memphis or let them stay at home and read the Comics or play in the park. They did not regularly bring them to the Naval Station even for formal services, for the Chapel was overcrowded with service personnel.

At the close of the war, however, the situation changed markedly. The Navy Department designated the Air Station at Memphis as a permanent installation and began

building housing projects (cottages and apartments) on the reservation for the use of personnel stationed there. The number of housing units constructed by the Navy was quite negligible, however, and most families had to seek living quarters off the Station. Concurrent with the designation of the Air Station as a permanent installation, several private real estate companies began housing developments in the little town of Millington, Tennessee, just a mile away. As a result, more and more families of service personnel moved into the area. As housing became available, families that had been living in Memphis and other surrounding towns began to move in order to be as near as possible to the place where the husband had duty. In a very short time there came to be more than one thousand families of Naval personnel residing on or near the Air Station.

The churches of Millington had practically no facilities for caring for this influx of residents. Their Sunday Schools were overcrowded before the new housing developments were begun. Both the Methodist and Baptist churches built annexes to their educational buildings but within a very short time their facilities were again overtaxed and new residents were moving in each week. Time after time the Chaplain received reports from parents who had taken their children to the Methodist Church only to find no room for them in the Sunday School. They then went across the street to the Baptist Church and found the same situation existing there.

It became apparent immediately that the children living on the Air Station, and probably a great many of those living outside, would have no religious instruction unless some sort of program were set up by the Chaplain.

After several of the parents had approached the Chaplain about the possibility of organizing a Sunday School, he set out to find a way to get something started. The first thing he tried to do was to find out just how many would be enrolled so as to have something definite to lay before the Commanding Officer when a request was submitted for an adequate building. The wife of one of the officers on the Admiral's Staff agreed to organize a committee of ladies to make a survey of the homes of Navy personnel in the immediate area to determine the actual number of dependents and the number who would be interested in attending the Sunday School. Four people were placed on the committee and, insofar as it was possible, the survey was conducted by telephone. Those homes not reached by telephone were visited by members of the committee. The head of the committee reported that not only were they given a cordial reception, whether calling by telephone or in person, but that most parents were genuinely enthusiastic about the possibilities of getting a program of religious education started immediately. When the information sheets were tabulated it was found that there were two hundred seventy-one (271) children, ranging in age from one to sixteen, whose parents said they would definitely be

enrolled and would attend if a Sunday School were organized. In addition, fifty-three (53) adults indicated their willingness to work in some capacity or other in the school. Most of them wanted to be "substitute" teachers, saying that they did not feel themselves to be as well qualified as others whom the Chaplain could get to teach. On the whole, however, the response was much better than had been expected.

It should be pointed out that one of the reasons for the good response was that the Chaplain had written an article for the Station's weekly newspaper indicating the purpose of the survey and the approximate time the committee members would be calling. The article stressed the need for workers in any Sunday School and urged those who were concerned for the spiritual welfare of the Navy children to give serious consideration for the needs of the soon-to-be-organized program at the Station.

Information sheets were filled out for families of all religions. Those indicating preference for Roman Catholic instruction were turned over to the Catholic Chaplain for whatever action he might want to take with regard to classes of instruction. Those indicating that the family was Jewish were turned over to a Rabbi in Memphis who made regular visits to the Station to minister to those of his faith.

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The Chaplain's next step was to discuss the results of this survey with the Executive and Commanding Officers. Both were genuinely interested in the situation and saw the

need of getting a program into action with the least possible delay. The Commanding Officer called in the Public Works Officer (the person in charge of all buildings and equipment) and asked that a suitable building be made available to the Chaplain within two weeks time. He stated that he did not have a really desirable building available, but that there was a two-story barracks building near the Chapel that could possibly be utilized with some improvising. This seemed to be the best solution to the immediate situation so it was agreed that the Chaplain would look the building over and make recommendations as to necessary work. After getting the committee of ladies that made the survey to come down and look the building over and make their recommendations, the Chaplain proceeded to work with the proper authorities and got the project started. The building was first cleaned up, some partitions were erected, and tables, chairs, fans, pianos, and other necessary equipment were brought in from every available source. Sand tables, worship center-tables, small benches and chairs, were constructed by the Public Works Department, but not without numerous delays for jobs of "military necessity" of course had high priority. Most of the work was done by parents at night and on holidays. One Chief Petty Officer told the Chaplain that he put in over one hundred hours within a period of six weeks. He was not saying that in expectation of praise but with a feeling of pride in having done something worthwhile.

Then, just about the time it looked fairly shipshape, the inevitable happened. People in other departments began to look with envious eyes upon this section and that room of the building. The Chaplain was approached by numerous groups who wanted just a "couple of rooms" for this or that activity. So it became necessary to make some firm decisions as to just how the building could be used by others without conflict with the program of the Sunday School. It was finally decided to restrict the use of the building to the activities connected with the Sunday School, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, and an amateur radio station. This made available fourteen rooms for class meetings and one large assembly room which could seat the total enrollment of the Sunday School.

With something definite now with regard to a meeting place, the Chaplain called a meeting of all those who had indicated their willingness to serve on the staff of the Sunday School. Each of the fifty-three people who had indicated interest in the work was contacted and urged to attend this opening meeting for the purpose of discussing the needs of the situation and to formulate plans for the actual opening of the school. For one reason or another there were fourteen absentees when the meeting was held. But with thirty-nine people present there was certainly an indication of interest on the part of the parents in getting a program of religious instruction started for their children.

This first meeting was rather brief and consisted chiefly of a statement by the Chaplain as to his conception of the needs and opportunities involved. Each person present was asked to indicate first and second preferences as to age groups with which they wanted to work, the type of work preferred, and previous experience in public or Sunday school teaching. The question was then raised as to what literature would be used. It immediately became apparent that no ready agreement could be reached among the members of this group for there were people from the Assembly of God, the Protestant Episcopal Church, and various other denominations in between! One of the things heard frequently during the course of the discussion was, "I want my child to learn more about the Bible. Why shouldn't we just study the Bible and not bother with other literature, except possibly to get picture cards for the children who are too small to read the Bible!". Still others wanted the Chaplain to select the literature and give it to them to "teach."

The Chaplain suggested that the matter of the selection of literature be held in abeyance until after the next meeting when it was hoped that some of the leading religious educational workers of Memphis would be present to assist in getting the program started. This was agreed upon and the meeting was adjourned.

Immediately after the meeting, first one and then another of the ladies cornered the Chaplain and suggested

that there could be no doubt but that this or that literature would meet the needs of any Sunday School that was Christian. In each instance the lady was positive that the literature of her denomination would always "be true to the teachings of Jesus." Within a day or two the Chaplain received a telephone call from the pastor of one of the larger Churches in Memphis. This pastor said that he had heard that we were making plans to open a Sunday School at the Air Station and that his Church would be glad to furnish all the literature needed for the project for the first year. He added that there was no doubt in his mind but that his congregation would be glad to continue their generosity indefinitely. The Chaplain thanked the gentleman for his concern and, as tactfully as possible, informed him that he did not feel it would be wise to accept such an offer. First of all, it was not a body of literature the Chaplain wanted to see used for it was purely sectarian in nature. Secondly, it was not necessary from the purely financial point of view, for the people who would be involved in the program had already indicated that they would support the school with their gifts as well as their time.

The next step was to arrange with the leaders of the religious educational programs of three of the larger denominations to meet with the Chaplain and plan a brief teacher-training program. At this meeting a faculty was selected from a list of those people considered to be doing the best

work in the various departments of their respective churches in Memphis. These people were contacted and a date set for a four-hour session with the prospective workers at the Air Station. When the time arrived for this training session, thirty-seven people were present to receive instruction. This was considered a rather remarkable showing in view of the fact that it was found that one of the members of the committee charged with the responsibility of contacting the prospective workers had failed to do her job and some ten or twelve people did not get the word about the meeting.

The Chaplain opened the session with a brief introductory statement as to its purpose. He then presented the Director of Religious Education of one of the large churches in Memphis who spoke for fifteen minutes on "Why a Program of Religious Education?". This talk was rather general but was presented quite well and seemed to serve the purpose of heightening the interest of those present in the necessity of caring for the religious needs of their children. After this talk the Chaplain introduced as "experts" the visiting teachers who would tell how they did their jobs in their own churches. The prospective workers in the soon-to-be-established Sunday School of the Naval Air Station were then divided up according to age group interests. The Memphis workers in the Kindergarten, Primary, Junior, and Intermediate Departments then met with them for the next three and one-half hours.

The Chaplain visited each of these groups during the course of the evening and found that even though four different denominations were represented in the visiting faculty, the emphasis was upon the life-situation approach rather than the material-centered. One of the teachers frankly stated later in a private conversation with the Chaplain that her Church followed in the authoritarian tradition but that she took the materials they gave her and used that which fit the situation as resource material. If it was not relevant to the situation she and her pupils ignored it and developed their own course of study out of their own experience of working together.

This meeting for teacher-training before the actual opening of the Sunday School was very helpful in presenting a point of view that many of the people who became teachers had never been exposed to. Several of them afterward stated to the Chaplain that they had always thought that getting ready to teach a Sunday School class consisted of "learning the material in the quarterly and then transmitting it to the children the next morning." It must not be inferred from the above statements that this one session with trained workers turned out a competent, well-rounded staff of teachers for the Sunday School of the Naval Air Station. It did not change the fundamental conceptions held by many of the workers, but it did at least expose them to the idea that what they had always done in the past might not be the only

way to teach. It did cause several of them to think and to do some reading and experimenting, which certainly justified the expenditure of effort that went into the planning and execution of the training session.

The following week a meeting of all workers was held for the purpose of discussing the literature situation. No really satisfactory solution to the problem could be reached. The tendency was for the workers in each age group to want to use the literature that was used by the worker from Memphis in the training session. They had seen how someone who was considered an expert had successfully used a particular piece of literature and so they naturally felt that it would be good to start with it. After a long discussion it was finally agreed that literature would be obtained from the various churches in Memphis for the remainder of the current quarter of the year, and then to place an order for the next quarter for the David C. Cook Company's non-denominational material. The literature obtained from Memphis churches was as follows:

Nursery, Kindergarten, Primary: Methodist

Junior: Southern Baptist

Intermediate: Presbyterian

Senior: Protestant Episcopal

The factor governing the use of the material for Seniors was its availability. The teacher working with the Seniors had asked for United Lutheran material but it was impossible to obtain it locally and would have taken too long to order it

from the Lutheran publishers.

It should be pointed out here that once the school actually got under way the literature problem did not come up again insofar as the teachers were concerned. They became so involved in the work of the class and with extra curricular activities with their groups that the material in the literature really became a secondary matter and was, for the most part, adapted to the needs of the children. With one or two exceptions the teachers seemed to try to take the children as they were and to interpret to them the meaning of the Christian faith for daily living. From the point of view of the Chaplain there was the crux of the whole situation, for there were many and varied interpretations of what Christianity might mean in different circumstances. Almost without exception, the teacher went into the class with a pretty firm notion as to what she wanted to accomplish. She tried to begin with the understanding of the child and to teach him what would be the Christian way of living under particular circumstances. True enough, she used the available literature as resource material and did not attempt to get the child to memorize it or to remember it as such. But she did use it and any other material she could get for the purpose of reinforcing her idea of what being Christian meant in that particular situation. That was particularly true with reference to the use of the Bible. It was accepted as the norm of Christian experience and was usually appealed to as the

final authority on most any question. Time and time again, teachers would call the Chaplain during the week and ask where to find a Biblical reference to "prove" such and such a point. And nothing that the Chaplain ever said or did toward urging that the Bible be used as a study of what people had done and thought in the past about God and Christ and how to live together, ever seemed to have any effect whatsoever on this rather prevalent attitude.

Several of the teachers were college graduates and had had teaching experience in the public schools employing modern educational techniques. They seemed, however, to have developed an ambivalent attitude toward the teaching of children in the Sunday School. On the one hand they felt that they must begin with the child and follow a life-centered approach. On the other hand they had the idea that there simply must be certain "saving" knowledge which should be imparted to the child in some way or another. This brought about a curious mixture of method. The teacher would insist that she was using the literature (whatever it might be) as resource material, and at the same time would be doing her best to see that the child came in the last analysis "to accept what the Bible said as final." This attitude was substantially the same, whether the teacher was a high school graduate with no formal teacher training, or a college graduate with years of public school teaching experience. As a result, it is feared that many of the children

could have attended Sunday School regularly for a year or two (the normal length of residence on the Air Station) without ever having gained a very clear conception of what it means to be a follower of the Christ.

It was mentioned that there were exceptions to the general attitude of the teachers toward how the work of the Sunday School should be carried on for best results. One of the teachers was convinced that the Bible and nothing but the Bible should be taught. Sunday after Sunday the members of her class came bringing their Bibles and red pencils for underlining. The teacher would open the class session with a prayer, asking God to open their minds that they might "rightly divide the word of truth," and then proceed to give the class line upon line and precept upon precept, telling them what the passage <u>really</u> meant! Now it is probable that the youngster who came faithfully to this class did learn some things that will be helpful in daily living. He certainly came to know more about the Bible than he had before. Most of the members of the class didn't even know where to begin to look for a particular book in the Bible when they started to study under this teacher. They had no knowledge whatsoever of its content. The teacher did succeed in getting them to be Bible-conscious. They memorized the names of the books of both Old and New Testaments. They learned the meaning of the term "proof-text," and could soon find some with a little assistance from the teacher. They came to know

a little something about the content of the New Testament and had a vague idea as to the meaning of the Old Testament. But they most certainly had no clear idea of how all this was to be integrated into their day by day living routine. They did have a high regard (as did the Chaplain and the other members of the faculty) for the character of the teacher, and likely had a feeling that the knowledge of the Bible which she possessed had something to do with the quality of life she displayed to the community. And that was something so good that they wanted to emulate it in their own lives, so the teacher could lead them anywhere. It is extremely doubtful, however, if the average member of that class ever really carried over into his public school activities and attitudes anything from the Sunday School other than the beneficent influence of the teacher's personality.

By way of contrast, there was the work of two Primary teachers. One had taught school for a number of years in a situation where the most progressive educational methods were utilized. She not only had the theory of child-centered education but also had the patience and skill and faith to attempt to put the theory into practice in a Sunday School class. The other was not a trained school teacher but a housewife and mother who tried to make her home a true democracy and helped her own children to grow without coercion or indoctrination. These two teachers carried on in the Sunday School a program that eliminated practically all disciplinary

problems. The situation created in the classroom was one wherein each child felt that he was having a part in what was being done, and where encouragement was given when most needed. These teachers realized that it is normal for children of the primary age to be active and no attempt was made to see that each child sat still and made no noise. Instead, each child was encouraged to express himself rather fully. When one got out of line to the extent that he was a distracting influence upon most of the others, the teachers did not scold or cajole, but would point out that Joey was working with the others and that they all were trying to do something together for the good of all. Most of the time this method worked remarkably well and little Joey would settle down without feeling that the teacher had forced him to do so against his will. It was the Chaplain's feeling that these two teachers were really accomplishing something that would be lasting, for these children were learning how to live together by doing things which helped them to grow in their capacity to give and take on a truly Christian basis. To say the least, a child in such a situation as this would seem to have a better chance of seeing the relevance of Christian principles to life than would the child who simply memorizes Bible verses.

Then, of course, there were the majority of the teachers who fell in between the two illustrations given. They were the ones who had a vague idea that the Sunday School was

a fine thing and should be carried on for the good of the children, but they had no real understanding of what Christian education should accomplish. They felt that the teacher should be able to keep the children reasonably quiet, and interested enough to participate in what goes on in the classroom. They would take the lesson material given to them and study it more or less, with the view of getting something out of it that could be handed on to the class on Sunday morning. Most of them honestly tried to adapt the material to the understanding of the child. All of them certainly had a genuine concern for the well-being of the children or they would not have taken the trouble to have prepared the lessons and met with the classes. These people wanted to see the children develop and proved to be amenable to suggestions as to how they could best do their jobs of teaching. They were the people who could be counted on always to attend training sessions and staff meetings.

The organization of the Sunday School at Memphis followed the departmentalization common to most Protestant churches. The Nursery and Kindergarten Departments were unusually large, making up some forty percent of the total enrollment of the school. The Primary and Junior Departments took in another forty percent, while the Intermediate Department had about twelve percent and the Senior Department only five percent. The Closely Graded plan was followed through the Intermediate Department, with classes corresponding to

public school classification. The Seniors were first divided into two classes but that proved impracticable as it was difficult to get two efficient teachers for them and the majority wanted to stay together in one class anyway. As for adults, one class was organized for them in the beginning with the hope that others might develop later. A rather good Bible teacher was put in charge of the class and he kept up an average attendance of some fifteen or sixteen, most of whom were enlisted men who were unmarried. The Chaplain tried to develop an interest in a married couples class, but did not succeed in getting one started. One of the reasons given by many of the young couples was that they had to stay home to look after the baby. While that excuse might not have been valid when a party was given on Saturday night, it seemed to be perfectly acceptable on Sunday morning.

No general assembly was held for the Sunday School, though there were a number of people who wanted something of that sort. The majority of the staff felt that a departmental assembly was best, so this plan was followed. The assembly lasted only ten minutes and proved to be very popular with the children. They presented, for the most part, the entire assembly programs and it was considered a privilege to take part. The Adult Bible Class had a very brief "devotional" consisting of a prayer and hymn. None of the classes had less than fifty minutes of actual classroom work.

As for the non-teaching members of the staff, the Chaplain acted as Chairman of the Board of Christian Education, the Superintendent of the Sunday School and his assistant, the Secretary, and the Treasurer, actually carried on the administration in much the same way as regularly organized schools in civilian churches. The Board of Christian Education was actually the teaching staff plus the administrative officers named above. This Board met monthly and practically all members attended most meetings. Some leader in Christian educational work was brought from Memphis for each of the first several meetings for the purpose of discussing various phases of the work of a Sunday School. The speaker always asked for questions and, after the first meeting, there was no hesitancy on the part of any of the teachers to speak up about any current problem. This proved to be one of the features of the monthly meeting and without exception the teacher who could not attend would call the Chaplain and explain why the absence was necessary.

So there is, in somewhat sketchy form, the beginnings of a program of Religious Education for a Naval installation. Certainly it was not everything that might have been desired but it was a beginning of what could develop into a means of meeting the needs of the situation.

II. A Survey of What Other Military Chaplains Have Done in Establishing Programs of Religious Education.

Contacts made in person and by correspondence with other military Chaplains (Navy, Army, and Air Force), have resulted in information which leads to the conclusion that the development of the program at Memphis was rather typical. There were some variations of an insignificant nature, but the over-all picture was quite consistent.

Without exception, the other Chaplains contacted had experienced difficulty in varying degrees when it came to obtaining quarters for the activities of the Sunday School. Only two reported that the facilities were really adequate for the program being carried on. Most of those reporting indicated that the local military authorities were very cooperative in that they made available to the Charlain the most adequate facilities at their disposal. It seems clear, however, that the authorities in Washington who allocate funds for the erection of buildings given over to the religious development of their constituency have not given serious thought to the needs of the children of service personnel living on the various military and naval installations.

Most of the buildings now in use were erected for some other purpose during war-time. True enough, chapels were erected by the hundreds but they were little more than places where public worship services could be held. The average chapel consisted of a rectangular building with seating

space for some four hundred fifty or five hundred persons. Back of the sacristy a very limited amount of office space was provided for the Chaplains. With few exceptions no rooms were provided in the chapel buildings for any sort of religious educational work. Of course, it must be remembered that when these structures were erected there was no thought that they would ever be used for permanent installations where children of naval and other military personnel would be quartered. But the fact is that there are now a number of installations being operated on a more or less permanent basis, where the number of children aboard runs from a dozen or so to several hundred. They become the Chaplain's responsibility insofar as religious instruction is concerned, and he must meet that need as best he may. The Roman Catholic Chaplain holds his catechetical classes, but the average Protestant Chaplain feels that he must do more than that to adequately meet the needs of the children committed to his care. So each Chaplain has to take whatever steps may be necessary to procure the buildings and equipment for the establishment of a program of religious education that will at least move toward meeting the needs of the particular situation in which he finds himself.

Most of the Chaplains reported difficulty in the matter of keeping a teaching staff intact. Some stated that it was not at all unusual for one teacher to have as many as thirty children in one class. One Chaplain stated that at

one Naval Base he had an average attendance of eighty at Sunday School but was never able to be sure of having more than two teachers present! In that situation, all children of Intermediate and Senior ages were put in one class and all of the younger ones in another.

No standardized method of procuring and training teachers can be said to exist among the military Chaplains. It seems that the average Chaplain goes about the matter much as he did while serving as a pastor in civilian life. Some seemingly have fairly good results and others rather poor. The majority reported staff conferences were held with some degree of regularity, but the indications were that most of them amounted to little more than social gatherings.

The fact that the constituency of the Chaplain is essentially of a transient nature probably leads to a feeling of pessimism on the part of some Chaplains. In most Sunday Schools in such situations the turn-over will average almost fifty percent annually, both of teachers and pupils. In spite of this, however, some of the Chaplains indicated that they are trying to make the best of the matter and are intensifying their training programs so as to make the most of the abilities their teachers possess while they are there on the job. One Chaplain reported that he always writes a letter to the Chaplain serving the area to which one of his teachers may be transferred. In this letter he outlines the qualifications of the teacher and tells what she has been

doing in the Sunday School, Parent-Teachers Association, or other groups working for the best interests of the community. He says that the results have been very gratifying, for most of the Chaplains have replied after having gotten the teacher assimilated in his religious education program. He also says that many of the teachers have written after having arrived at their new duty station and have thanked him for his interest in seeing that they were welcomed into the new community.

Practically all of the Chaplains contacted indicated that they had faced the same problem in the selection of suitable Sunday School literature as that encountered in the Memphis situation. One Chaplain reported that his Sunday School uses Methodist literature one quarter, Presbyterian the next, and Baptist the next! One alternates year by year between Methodist and Presbyterian publications. Another uses literature from the Pilgrim Press and still another uses that put out by the Christian Board of Publication. Four of them reported the use of David C. Cook literature. In fact, the only thing the Chaplains all seemed to have in common in this matter was that none were satisfied with the solutions arrived at, even though most reported their teachers were generally satisfied. They all seemed to feel that they have had to compromise their own beliefs in the matter in order to arrive at something that would be at least half-way acceptable to the parents and teachers with whom they work. That

is, all but one who stated that he had had no problem whatsoever. He had just selected the literature and given it to the teachers saying, "Here it is. Teach it." He stated that his only problem was that of getting teachers who would do what he told them to do! Some of the Chaplains felt that the literature they were using was too dogmatic and too sectarian, while others indicated the reverse to be true.

All of the Chaplains indicated that there was no problem insofar as raising money for equipment and literature is concerned. The families who live on the military installations are eager, apparently, to do their part toward the establishment of a program that will provide religious instruction for their children. They may not know much about what should be accomplished but the Chaplains report them willing to work to get a program started. It has been found that there are always a number of skilled craftsmen on any military installation, and they have always proved to be more than willing to give of their time for the building of equipment for the school. Carpenters, metalsmiths, and others, are usually present in great numbers and many show up when the Chaplain calls for assistance in building tables, chairs, benches, blocks, and other necessary items. Most of the larger military installations maintain large hobby shops and these are utilized after working hours for the improvement of the Sunday School facilities. It has been the experience of many of the Chaplains that it is far better to get the

father of Joey Brown and some of his friends to build useful articles for the Sunday School, than it would be to take up a collection to pay for whatever might be needed. When a man works for several nights to build something that is being used by his son or daughter, he will naturally have pride in the institution that is serving to guide the children in their development. More than one instance has been given of a family having begun regular attendance at Church because of the father's having helped in the building of furniture for the Sunday School.

Another thing all of the Chaplains seem to have in common is that their programs of Christian Education are set up to deal almost exclusively with children through the Senior Department only. The majority of those reporting had only one class for adults and indicated that it is almost always poorly attended. This seems to be a greatly neglected field of religious educational possibilities and certainly deserves a great deal of study and experimentation.

Most Chaplains have a chapter of the Service Men's Christian League for the sailors, but that is reported as having been attended only fairly well. These Chapters are organized along the same lines as the Christian Endeavor and Youth Fellowship groups. The official publication of the League is the "Link" magazine and lesson materials are contained in each monthly issue. This material is based on International Council of Religious Education plans, and for

the most part is quite good. It is usually presented in lecture form with some class discussion following. Two out of three Chaplains state that they have personally led the discussion groups. Some have experimented with lay leaders but have apparently come to feel that the only way to keep the group intact is to have ministerial leadership. The consensus of opinion is that the discussion periods give opportunity for real understanding and growth, as some fellow who has not been brought up in a Christian family will ask intelligent questions that cut across the stereotyped phrases and get at the heart of the matter being studied. The meetings of the League are held at the time most convenient for the men who will be most likely to attend. A number of Chaplains report that the tendency during the past few years is to hold the meetings on Sunday evenings.

The Service Men's Christian League is not considered to be a part of the activities of the regular Sunday School program, and there is seldom, if ever, a feeling on the part of the individual members that they are a part of the overall program of religious education. One of the reasons for this is that the average sailor is in the group at a particular station for only a short time, possibly six months or a year at most. He becomes interested in the activities of the League through a buddy or has had contact with it at another station. He lines up with the League and may work at the job with enthusiasm for the time he is there. But the sailor who

does this is unmarried, and the experience of the Chaplains is that he is not likely to develop an intense interest in what the Chaplain is seeking to do for the children of others. He is likely to think of the Sunday School and related activities as existing for children. He thinks well of the program in the abstract, and may even volunteer his services as a bus driver or in some other capacity, but he sees no immediate relevance of the Sunday School to himself.

All of the Chaplains with whom this has been discussed have indicated that they feel a need for spending more time in helping these people become aware of the things the Church ought to be doing in the lives of all the people. Certainly all agree that the average program of Christian education being carried on outside the pulpit ministry is confined to the children of the community for the most part.

III. Basic Issues In Religious Education Which the Chaplain Must Evaluate.

In thinking over the things done in setting up the program of religious education at Memphis, and in studying the reports other Chaplains have made of similar activities, the writer is forced to conclude that, important as may be the matters of obtaining adequate building space for classes, training of teachers and other staff members, selecting suitable literature, and planning the curriculum, there is a more fundamental matter that should be worked out by the Chaplain before any program is ever initiated. And that is the matter of objectives. He ought to know what it is that he wants to accomplish. He ought to know what methods can best be used to accomplish the desired results. This is no place for foggy thinking or erratic sailing. The Chaplain had best clear his mind and know that his compass is true before he begins. Unless he does, the efforts of all concerned will be likely to just add to the general confusion the average person has about the meaning of the Christian religion and its relevance to day by day living.

In order for any Chaplain to make an intelligent decision with regard to objectives he should be thoroughly familiar with the underlying philosophy of each of the major streams of thought regarding the religious educational process. It may be assumed that each Chaplain has been trained in a seminary emphasizing either the traditional or the progressive approach to religious education. Also, he has

had experience in a civilian pastorate where one or the other was emphasized in practice.

The traditional Protestant teaching has been that all people are by nature sinners, and the purpose of religious education is to bring the individual to the point where he will make a decision for Christ and accept His salvation. This view has assumed that such a decision would bring with it a power from without the individual that would enable him to "be Christian" in all of his doings from henceforth, whereas he had been a sinner before the time of decision. It has assumed that the individual would thenceforth have the power to overcome any temptation that might befall him, and to meet any situation with which he might be faced as a Christian. It has assumed that this experience of conversion brought to the individual complete maturation of character. This view, whether set forth in intellectual treatises or revivalistic sermons, contained the doctrines of God's absolute sovereignty, the depravity of man due to original sin, the necessity of repentance and complete faith in God, and the expectation of the eternal heavenly life given by God's grace to the faithful and chosen, or the burning fires of hell to the unrepentant. These views of the nature of man and of the conditions for the establishment of a satisfactory relationship with God naturally influenced the content and method of the religious educational programs developed by Protestant denominations.

The first Sunday Schools in the United States, contrary to popular opinion, were not set up for the purpose of giving religious instruction, but for the teaching of the rudiments of education to the children of the less fortunate in the land. However, within fifty years of the establishment of the first Sunday School here in 1785, most of the denominations had organized Sunday School boards and were devoting a great deal attention to this means of teaching their children and youth. The primary purpose of the Sunday School thus came to be that of teaching "sound doctrine." Of course, the doctrine taught by each denomination was that which was considered by the group to be sound and saving. The content and method of teaching varied somewhat but the central purpose was the same. The Bible and various catechetical material formed the basis for most of the instruction.

> That the aim of religious instruction in the Sunday School was to show children their lost condition and to lead them to accept the saving work of Christ and that revival methods should be used in securing their conversion when they reached the age of accountability were generally accepted beliefs.[1]

Such views have not been eliminated from the thinking of many people in the Christian world today. They have been modified by some denominations but it is probably safe to say that the majority of Church School literature being produced in the United States today is based on the fundamental

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[1]Elliott, Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 27.

assumptions of the authoritarianism which developed during the Reformation and continues to the present day. When these assumptions are held, then the teaching of religion to children becomes a matter of passing on what the adult members of the Christian churches see as "truth." There is little opportunity for critical examination of what is being taught. It is the doctrinal position of the denomination that is to be emphasized and it is taught in such a way as to most effectually thwart questioning. It becomes a matter of all or nothing. There can be no half-way measures. One gets the truth, and, becoming aware of his lost condition, repents and is saved, or turns his back upon the Lord's gift of salvation and is lost forever.

If this premise is accepted then the planning and execution of a program of Christian education is made comparatively simple. Determine what the truth actually is according to one's personal and denominational beliefs, and then devise the best literature for the propagation of this truth. Then decide what methods may best be used for passing this material on to the pupils and begin the indoctrination of teachers for this specific task. This view of man and how he comes to a saving religious experience has led to a rather widespread adoption of the Herbartian methods of instruction by which "the outcome expected is stated in the aim, and the teaching plan consists of steps by which this predetermined outcome is to be reached. Therefore, the procedure is

ideally suited for teaching authoritatively doctrines or interpretations of the Christian religion."[2]

But this view was challenged as far back as 1836 on strictly theological grounds. Horace Bushnell objected to the revivalistic method that claimed to have all the truth, and he pointed out that what a child will ultimately become depends to a great extent upon the conditions under which he grows up, the home life being the most important single factor. In 1844 Bushnell published an article setting forth the idea that children might be brought up in a truly Christian home, and with loving nurture be able to attain to the state of character the conversion experience was supposed to bring exclusively. This view was attacked by the majority of the religious leaders of his day, but it served to bring to a head the issue which has continued to confront religious educators to this day.

The modern pioneer in the so-called "liberal" religious educational movement, was George A. Coe, one of the founders of the Religious Education Association. Taking into consideration what the authoritarian view had accomplished, and being aware of the modern developments in education, psychology, and sociology, Coe pointed out that Christian education should consist of the constant reconstruction of the purposes of individuals and society. He pointed out that

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[2]Ibid., p. 39.

man is to a great extent the product of his social existence, and that the individual in his social relationships should be the center of concern for Christian education. He says "the depravity that the child exhibits ... is commonly not that of his own heart, but that of remediable faults of adults and in adult society."[3] There have been developments in religious education since Coe, but in general it may be said that the best liberal thought has been founded upon or has been developed out of Coe's presuppositions.

But that which we have termed the "best liberal thought" has never been translated into practical action in the majority of our Protestant churches. Indeed, it may be said that only a small minority have employed methods consistent with the teachings of Coe. However, more and more people in the field of religious education have come to be increasingly aware of the shortcomings of the traditional methods. The increasing secularization of life in this country during and immediately following the First World War led to the appointment of a committee by the International Council of Religious Education, for the purpose of developing a curriculum that would be more in line with the needs of the children and youth of our churches. Dr. William Clayton Bower was head of this committee which worked for several years in the construction and development of a new curriculum.

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[3]Coe, A Social Theory of Religious Education, p. 171.

This Curriculum Committee placed the emphasis upon growing experience of the child to be taught rather than upon the materials or doctrines. It did not ignore the Bible nor minimize its importance, but pointed out that its great value lies in being properly used as a resource for those who would know how men in the past have searched for and found fellowship with God and with each other.

> The concern of Christian Education is to help persons, whether young or old, to live as Christians. ... to face the actual situations that their world presents to them and to resolve the issues involved in terms of Christian values and purposes. In a world of change attention needs to be given as much to the possibilities of present experience as to the precedents of past experience. The end of education is not the acquisition of knowledge or ideas as such, but the organization of growing knowledge for the more competent and fruitful ordering of life. This means that education should be pointed definitely toward action in the making and remaking of personal and social life.[4]

This committee also pointed out that Christian education, in order to meet the demands of modern life, would have to go beyond the casual Sunday School instruction periods which dealt with the presentation of "lessons." Realizing that improved means of communication have resulted in our living no longer in isolated culture patterns but in a society that has become secularized in the schools and even in the homes,

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[4]International Council of Religious Education, Christian Education Today, p. 14.

the committee further stated that

> Christian education is related to every phase of the whole of living, involving the family, vocation, the functions of citizenship, and the intellectual, moral and aesthetic activities... Christian education addresses itself to the Christian growth of the whole person. It takes into full account the emotional life of persons and groups as well as their intelligence.[5]

Even though these recommendations were made by the committee set up by the International Council of Religious Education, they were never given complete implementation. True enough, there are churches here and there across the land that have sought to put these principles into practice in their Sunday schools and related activities, but the fact remains that protestantism by and large has never set up a curriculum that would be true to the Bower Committee's recommendations. The hope of those who are in sympathy with this progressive or liberal philosophy of religious education would seem to lie in those churches that have put into operation such a program and are achieving definite results thereby.

The adoption of such a program of religious education would result in an entirely different view of what materials should be presented for study. The question that would be uppermost in the minds of those planning the courses of study for any age group would be: Is this the best available material for the promotion of the pupil's own best and highest

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[5] Ibid., p. 14.

quality of life at this particular time and stage of development? This would not make less sacred any of the materials used by the churches in the past, but would make all of life something to be viewed as sacred. In the words of A. J. William Myers:

> God's whole universe is His book. He reveals himself in the Bible, in history, and in literature, in art and in music, in nature, and in science, in the factory and in all the daily occupations of everyday life. Out of this storehouse, so rich and varied in its contents, the wise steward brings both what is old and new.[6]

And not only would this attitude be taken toward the selection of materials from all of life, but those planning the courses of study would keep in mind the results of modern discoveries as to how learning takes place. It would result in the adoption of the principle laid down by John Dewey: learning best takes place when the child can see the relevance of the subject matter to life as he understands it. To quote Myers again:

> All material must be meaningful to the pupil. There is no reason or excuse for teaching anything to pupils that is meaningless in the hope that some day it may be of use. Generally the mistake is made not so much of presenting "advanced" material as of presenting what is foreign to the pupil's whole world of experience.[7]

If the objective of a program of Christian education

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[6] Myers, <u>What Is Christian Education?</u>, p. 91.
[7] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 91.

is to enable individuals to grow in Christian experience and character, then that must be the criterion by which materials and methods are to be evaluated. On the other hand, if the objective is to make the individual aware of his lost condition and bring him to a readiness for the conversion experience, the material selected will be that containing "saving" knowledge, and the method employed will be that of authoritarianism. To emphasize this point and to set the two positions in clear relief see the following statement made by Professor Elliott concerning the Bower Committee's report on curriculum:

> In traditional Protestant religious education, the Bible and the accepted interpretations of religion are the organizing center, and religious education is conceived as an improved methodology for teaching the Bible and Christian truths; in the Bower report life situations are the organizing center and the Bible is utilized as an aid in meeting these situations on a Christian basis. In traditional Protestant religious education, Christian faith and practice are considered as already known, and education is a method of securing their acceptance and application; in the Bower report, what is Christian in faith and practice is to be discovered in and through the educational process. In traditional Protestant religious education, the teaching is a preparation for the experience of conversion; in the Bower report, it is assumed that Christian faith and experience are to be realized through growth from early childhood to adult years.[3]

So the individual Chaplain is inevitably forced to choose between the fundamental assumptions outlined above if

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[3] Elliott, op. cit., p. 62.

he is to give intelligent direction to the program of religious education which he would set up on a military installation to meet the needs of his constituency. What his decision will be depends greatly upon the background and training of the individual Chaplain. The chances are very good that he will attempt to do about the same sort of thing in the service that he would do in civilian life as pastor of a parish church. In fact, he will likely do in the service the same sort of thing that he has already done in parish life. It all depends upon the individual and how susceptible he is to change. He can legally do what he thinks best, to the extent that those who make up his congregations are willing to go along with him. Navy Regulations do not bind him to any particular type of religious education, either as to method or philosophy, but give complete freedom to preach and teach "according to the manner and forms of the church of which he is a member."[9] And for all practical purposes we may say that examples of both authoritarian and liberal types of religious education may be found within any particular denomination represented in the chaplaincy of the military services. What the individual Chaplain believes about the nature of man and how he may attain salvation will determine whether or not the program will be authoritarian or progressive. There is no set rule in the military services other

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[9] United States Navy Regulations, 1948, Article 0807.

than that stated and it is extremely unlikely that there will ever be handed to the Chaplain a program outline to be put into effect.

It is the conviction of the writer of this paper that any Chaplain should study carefully the fundamental assumptions of each of the prevalent streams of Christian education and through prayerful consideration of the children who are under his care come to some definite conclusions <u>before</u> proceeding in setting up a program of religious education. Then he will at least know what he is trying to do and whether or not the methods he is employing are those which have proved to be most effective.

IV. Some Conclusions

1. Regarding the Selection and Training of Teachers.

All ministers are faced with the perennial problem of getting and keeping teachers who are really qualified for their duties in the religious educational program. Most of the time the minister has to recruit teachers on the basis of their willingness to "do their best," rather than on the basis of actual competency. He takes them as they are and hopes that they will attend his yearly training institutes and thereby become more or less qualified for the teaching of the classes to which they are assigned.

The Chaplain in the military services is brought face to face with this problem in an intensified form. It is a rare instance when any teacher remains on the same installation for more than two years. Her husband's normal tour of duty at any one place is two years or less, so even the maximum time the Chaplain can count on any one individual as a teacher is two years, and usually less. It is safe to say that the personnel turn-over will average at least sixty percent each year.

As to the methods of procurement of teachers for a program of religious education on a military installation, each Chaplain will likely have some particular technique which he relies upon rather heavily. However, it has been found that the following four procedures, if continued over a period of time, will yield very satisfactory results.

First, the Chaplain should write regular articles for the station newspaper, informing the residents of the work and the needs of the Sunday School and other religious educational activities. The editors of these papers will welcome such articles, particularly if they are well written, and they will be read by those who are connected with the military establishment. Sometimes it will be possible to have some member of the staff who may be particularly well qualified in journalism to write a weekly "Religious Education" column. But even if the Chaplain has personally to write the articles it will be well worth the effort required.

Second, the Chaplain should present the need for workers when he speaks to the Parent Teacher Association groups. This will insure contact with probably ninety percent of the parents who have children in the public school conducted on the station. In addition it will open the way for talks with individual public school teachers who are quite often glad to share in the work of the Sunday School and related activities. Most of these people will have read the Chaplain's newspaper articles already and will be more likely to respond than will those who have no children.

Third, each family should be visited by the Chaplain as soon as possible after its arrival aboard the station. Every Chaplain knows how to procure lists of those moving to or from the area. A well-timed call may be instrumental not only in getting the children enrolled in the Sunday School,

but also in obtaining the services of some well-qualified teachers.

Fourth, it is well to mention the need for workers from the pulpit from time to time. This could well be overdone but the matter of reports to the entire congregation as to the status of the religious educational program is very definitely worth-while.

Of course, the Chaplain will want to interview each prospective teacher before turning over to her a class of children. It would be impossible for anyone to lay down a set of rules to govern absolutely the selection of any particular person as a teacher. However, it is obvious that the person whose ideas are diametrically opposed to those of the Chaplain and his constituency could not logically be placed in a position of leadership. For instance, one Chaplain was approached by a person who purported himself to be an experienced Sunday School teacher and who had been "told by the Lord" to take over a particular class which was under the supervision of the Chaplain. In discussing the matter with this man it soon became apparent that he could not teach in this particular Sunday School at all. He had "gone to seed" on the Book of Daniel and, from the Chaplain's point of view at least, would have disrupted the entire Sunday School if given the opportunity. (This man, incidentally, is now in a mental institution!) Certainly the Chaplain will want to be sure that the person put in the place of responsibility the

teacher occupies will be one who is competent in some measure to do the sort of thing he conceives to be necessary.

All of these factors add up to mean that the Chaplain must have some sort of continuous teacher-training program. Here again there will be variations of method but something will have to be done or the religious educational program will bog down for lack of teachers. Some have found that the most workable plan has been to have an understudy for each active teacher. This will insure "on the job training" and will serve to make replacements easier when teachers are transferred away. It will also be better for the children, for they will never feel that a radical change is being made when the teacher leaves. They will be making an adjustment to a new assistant rather than to a new head teacher.

Another way of providing valuable training is to hold regular monthly departmental meetings for the purpose of giving all teachers an opportunity to discuss frankly their mutual problems. It will be possible in most situations for the Chaplain to arrange for an occasional visit to these departmental meetings of leaders in various phases of religious education in the nearest city. Most Chaplains seem to have had the experience that the leading people in the large churches are more than glad to assist those working in the Sunday Schools and other related activities connected with military installations.

It would also be well to send teachers to visit churches in nearby cities where exceptional work is being done in religious education. By observing the methods and procedures of those who have been successful over a long period of time, young teachers are often inspired to become better workers with those in their charge. One Chaplain reported that it was possible to "apprentice" each of his new teachers to the leading worker in any particular department in the large churches of the city fifteen miles away. He stated that, almost without exception, each of those now teaching in his Sunday School had spent from three to four sessions with what he considered a "model" class in one of the larger churches of the city. He had a working arrangement with four different departments of three different churches and felt that the total program of religious education on his station was greatly enhanced thereby.

2. Regarding the Selection of Literature to be Used.

Before a choice of literature can be made it will be necessary for the Chaplain and those working with him in the program to arrive at a clear understanding of the objective for which their efforts are being expended. If it is decided to use the Sunday School sessions as a means of transmitting certain "saving" knowledge to the pupils, then the literature will be selected on the basis of how well it contributes to that end. There are various materials available from the denominational publishing houses that approach religious

education in this manner. It may be that some Chaplains will find that their constituency will want to study first one and then another denominational approach. It has already been indicated in this paper that at least one Naval Station Sunday School is doing this sort of thing.

It is also possible to obtain literature put out by non-denominational publishing houses. Some of this is based on the International Lessons and some on the work of independent writers. In any event the material should be studied very carefully before being put into the hands of teachers for use in the teaching of children.

There may be situations where the Chaplain and people want to place the emphasis upon the progressive development of the child in Christian experience and character. In this case the materials selected for study will of necessity be quite different from those used in a program that has as its main objective the teaching of sound doctrine.

Without attempting to list specific literature that might be used in each of these situations, it must be pointed out that the materials to be used must be selected in line with the basic objective of the religious education program. The great question to be kept in mind is this: Does this literature help in attaining the objective for which the program exists? Is it the best available material for attaining the desired ends?

It may well be that, on the basis of study and experimentation, some of the literature will be obtained from one publishing house and some from another. Indeed, it is not likely that a discriminating Chaplain will find all of the literature of any one publishing house equally acceptable for all age groupings.

One thing that will have to be considered at all times is that no matter what the objectives may be, no literature should be used unless it comes within the understanding of the individuals for whom it is intended. It has been found that real learning does not take place outside the ability and understanding of the individual. In other words, the literature must be relevant to the individual where he is now if it is to be effective. Professor Bower has well said that

> ... effective character education will best achieve its ends by working from beginning to end within the concrete experience of growing persons. It will begin with behavior patterns as it finds them in the going experience of persons. It will proceed by assisting growing persons to form some judgment about these patterns. It will assist persons to understand their experience and the factors of its control. On the basis of such a judgment and such an understanding, it will assist growing persons to reconstruct their behavior patterns from what they are into what, in the light of their emerging set of values, they desire them to be.[10]

While he was writing about that which he considered to be effective means of character education, we may be equally

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[10] Bower, Character Through Creative Experience, p. 260.

sure that authoritarian teaching must also begin with the person where he is if its objective is to be accomplished.

3. Regarding the Enlistment of the Cooperation of the Parents in the Total Program.

There has been built up over the years the general idea that parents should take or send their children to the Sunday School, and that it is the business of the teachers, under the supervision of the pastor, to see that they receive the necessary religious instruction. More and more it has come to be the rule that the parents pay little or no attention to what or how the children are taught. Often the parents are called together on rally day or promotion day to hear their children recite verses or sing songs especially rehearsed for the occasion. If the children make a reasonably good showing the average parent goes blissfully along to await the next such occasion wherein Junior will have another chance to show what he has memorized.

Today, however, the leaders in religious education have come to be almost unanimous in their belief that the parents must know something of the objectives of the Sunday School and related activities, and further, that they must be sympathetic with those objectives and really cooperative toward the total program if the best results are to be obtained. This is true regardless of what the objective may be, whether that of promulgating the doctrines of ultra-fundamentalism or that of developing Christian character

through growth and experience in the most modern religious educational system in the land. In this connection we can again refer to the Dower Committee's report which points out:

> As the primary and most intimate social group, the family is potentially the most important means of Christian education for all its members. If the purposes, relationships, and attitudes which prevail in the family are basically Christian, and if the activities in which the family engages include those which bring the religious life to articulate expression, we have in the family the ideal setting for Christian education. No greater opportunity confronts the church than that of helping families to achieve this ideal.[11]

This being true, the Chaplain will make sure that a definite program for enlisting the cooperation of the parents is undertaken. This will be a continuing concern of the Chaplain, for we may be sure that, regardless of his own ideas on religious education, he will not be able successfully to carry on a program that has as its main interest an objective that has not gained the acceptance of the parents.

Just how the greatest possible degree of cooperation may be elicited from the parents is something that each Chaplain will have to work out with his staff. One Chaplain has found it very helpful to have a monthly supper for parents and teachers. This enables them to get better acquainted, for they are seated according to interest groups, and thus share their mutual problems with regard to Bill, John, and Mary. It is also possible to see that each home receives a

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[11] International Council of Religious Education, op.cit.,p.20

copy of a magazine for parents that deals with the objectives of the type of religious education program being conducted. In a poll taken on one Naval Base it was found that ninety five percent of the parents read one or more articles in the literature sent them each month by the Sunday School. One Chaplain reports that each quarter he sends out a questionnaire to each home requesting an evaluation of the work being done by the Sunday School. He says the response is almost one hundred percent and that the results of these questionnaires are discussed fully at his staff meetings. Some literature available provides for weekly work by the parents and children at home in the study of lesson materials. There is a danger here that the parents may be made just monitors, and that the children will come to resent the study, but it is one method of seeing that the parents know what the Sunday School is trying to do for their children.

Certainly we must agree that, whatever the method employed, it is vitally necessary to see that the parents are aware of the objectives of the program and that they are cooperative. Otherwise, it will be most difficult to accomplish the end for which the Sunday School was established, whether it be that of passing on a body of knowledge which may bring the child to an awareness of his need for salvation, or for the purpose of aiding the child to grow in Christian character through experience in living.

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